

having the advantages of ability, energy, and educational training, pursue industriously throughout their lives the business or profession that they have chosen, but who give none of their talents to the common good. Fitted in every way to be leaders in every moment for the benefit of the community, they devote their lives solely to their own interests. They accumulate fortunes, perhaps; they die and are deemed successful men. By every standard of right thinking their lives are pitiable failures. For they have thrown away their opportunities and have passed through this world leaving it no better for their having lived in it. And that is the highest tribute, the great accomplishment—that every man should be able to say truly that he tried to make life better for those who are to follow him.

You may perhaps think that what I have said bears very remotely upon the subject of education, the subject in which you are interested and some phase of which is supposed to be the subject of this talk. I think not. The training which we call education must have some purpose, some object; and that purpose is that men and women shall be better fitted to play their parts in life.

We must believe also that life has some aim, that we are going somewhere; that nations have ideals and destinies. We cannot believe that mankind is but a species of animal life which reproduces generation after generation, throughout the centuries, having no purpose and adding nothing to its spiritual or social good. Neither can we believe that the only purpose of mankind is, through scientific investigation, to seek out and apply the mysteries of the air and earth and other physical phenomena to the material needs of the race. Educational training having that as its only object would soon find these conducted in a world of anarchy.

Aside from that spiritual development which we associate with and attribute to religious training, the great aim of mankind and of every nation must be the growth of understanding and the betterment of man's relation to man—an understanding of the

obligations and duties of the social relation—with the development and establishment, as primary principles of human conduct, of the attributes of charity and tolerance, and—above all—justice.

And progress and development, as it affects the social relation, comes through the orderly processes of established government; comes through the united effort of men acting through the only agency which can express their common purpose. Surely to interest oneself in such a thing should be the first pride of a citizen; and surely, those of you who are to train others can find no nobler purpose than to teach them this duty.

JOHN PAUL

THE JEFFERSON LITERARY SOCIETY BEGINS ITS WORK

AN EDUCATIONAL UNIT IN EIGHTH GRADE
ENGLISH

EDITOR'S NOTE:—The student teacher felt the need of a literary society in the eighth grade, but did not wish to suggest its organization herself. At her request two of the College literary societies prepared programs of special interest to the children and invited them. Following the first meeting the children showed much interest, but made no positive request for a society of their own. But the second program brought their need to a consciously expressed stage; "Why can't we have a society in English class?" came spontaneously from all sides. So strong was their purpose that the ensuing steps in the organization of the society came naturally with only a minimum of guidance from the student teacher.

I. *What the Children Did*

- A. They decided to organize a literary society.
- B. They examined constitutions and books on parliamentary law to find out how to organize.
- C. They organized the society by:
 1. Electing a temporary chairman and a temporary secretary.

2. Electing a committee to write a constitution and by-laws for the society.
 3. Writing and adopting the constitution and by-laws.
 4. Electing permanent officers: a president, a vice-president, a secretary, a treasurer, a chairman of the program committee, a critic, and a sergeant-at-arms.
- D. The program committee recommended for the society's work:
1. Telling, reading aloud, and dramatizing stories
 2. Having debates and declamations
 3. Reciting and singing favorite poems
 4. Making reports on interesting books on favorite authors
 5. Reading original stories and poems prepared in English class
 6. Reporting current events of interest in Virginia, in the United States, and in the world
 7. Making a booklet of their programs to be left for the guidance of the next class
- E. They gave their initial program, consisting of:
1. A short sketch of Thomas Jefferson's life
 2. A Thanksgiving poem, "He Thanks Thee Best" (given from memory)
 3. A reading, "The Origin of Thanksgiving"
 4. A story, "Jeff's Thanksgiving Turkey"
- F. They wrote an account of their society for the city newspaper, the *Harrisonburg News-Record*.
- G. They gave similar programs twice a week for the remainder of the quarter.

II. What the Children Learned

- A. They learned how to conduct their meetings according to parliamentary procedure.
- B. They learned through examination that every constitution has a preamble, articles, sections, and amendments. They

also learned that the constitution provides for the election of officers, their duties and term of office, the time of meeting, names, object, and membership of society, the dues, and fines.

- C. They learned the standard form for debating.¹

1. The proposition must be debatable.
2. The proposition must be stated as clearly and as concisely as possible.
3. The debate must include an introduction which states, and, if necessary, explains the proposition; a body of proof which presents the arguments; and a conclusion which summarizes the proof.
4. The material in a debate must be well organized.
5. The various points must be proved one by one.

- D. They learned current happenings from reading newspapers and magazines.

- E. They became acquainted with many interesting stories from the synopses which were given at the society meetings; for instance, a synopsis of *The Man Without a Country*, which was given at the first meeting.

- F. They became familiar with many interesting incidents in the lives of the authors studied; among these were Thomas Jefferson, Edward Everett Hale, Carl Sandburg, and Booker T. Washington.

III. Skills Developed

- A. They acquired technic in parliamentary procedure such as addressing the presiding officer, making motions, and making and withdrawing nominations.
- B. They had practice in judging their own oral work in the light of the following standards:
1. Did the speaker look at the audience?
 2. Did he speak loud enough for everyone to hear?

¹Brooks's *English Composition, Book Two*. American Book Co. Lyon's *Elements of Debating*. University of Chicago Press.

3. Did he speak distinctly and pronounce all words correctly?
4. Did he use too many ands, buts, or sos?
5. Did he use good diction throughout?
- C. They developed independence in evaluating their written work, using the following standards:
 1. The title must suit the story; it must be narrowed.
 2. The beginning sentence must hint back at the subject, arouse interest, and make one wish to hear more.
 3. Every sentence in a paragraph must help in its development; there must be no unrelated sentences.
 4. The use of connectives must be limited; they must be selected carefully to make the meaning clear.
 5. The structure of the sentences must be correct throughout.

IV. *Appreciations and Attitudes Encouraged*

- A. They developed such interest in compositions that they wrote them to read at their society meetings because they really wanted to write; the "outer urge" became an "inner urge," and they worked for the pleasure they derived from it.
- B. They had opportunity to develop a taste for good books and poems.
- C. They experienced the value of co-operation. They realized that the officers of the society could not make it a success by themselves and that each child must do his part.
- D. They grew in independence.
 1. They contributed original compositions for dramatization at the society meetings.
 2. They corrected each other's compositions. Several times during the quarter they corrected each other's papers and tabulated the errors, recording them on a class chart on the board.

3. They arranged the programs for the meetings.

V. *Bibliography*

- A. Materials used in organizing the society.
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- B. Sources of materials for programs.

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